



PRESS RELEASE

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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS DEFENDANT CONVICTED OF POSSESSION OF A FIREARM BY A CONVICTED FELON

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today that at the conclusion of a three day trial, Jesse Wright III was found guilty by a federal jury in Tampa on one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The count typically carries a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000 and a three-year term of supervised release, but could be increased due to the defendant's prior criminal history.

The defendant was indicted on September 10, 2002. The Indictment alleged that on or about March 24, 2002, in the Middle District of Florida, the defendant, a convicted felon, possessed a Smith and Wesson 9mm pistol. The defendant is a 30-year old resident of Polk County, Florida with at least three prior felony convictions.

According to testimony and evidence presented at trial, the defendant was arrested on March 24, 2002 by the Mulberry Police Department for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and assault and battery on a police officer.

The case was prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice program “Project Safe Neighborhoods,” a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative aimed at reducing violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws. Mr. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials as “Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!”

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Mulberry Police Department and the Polk County Sheriff's Office investigated this case.